

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 2-37 have been added herein.

The following replaces all prior versions and listing of the claims:

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (New) A hardware member for attachment to a coupling mechanism of a safety belt for protecting an occupant in a seat of a vehicle, the hardware member comprising:
 - a tang portion for attachment to the coupling mechanism, the tang portion defining a tang longitudinal axis;
 - a second longitudinal axis defined to be substantially perpendicular to the tang longitudinal axis; and
 - a body portion coupled to the tang portion, the body portion having a first opening and a second opening formed therethrough;wherein the first and second openings are positioned between the coupling mechanism and the seat when the tang portion is attached to the coupling mechanism.
3. (New) The hardware member of claim 2, wherein:
 - the first opening comprises a first elongated slot; and
 - the second opening comprises a second elongate slot.

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4. (New) The hardware member of claim 3, wherein:

the first elongated slot defines a first slot longitudinal axis that is at a first angle to the second longitudinal axis; and

the second elongated slot defines a third slot longitudinal axis that is at a second angle to the second longitudinal axis.

5. (New) The hardware member of claim 2, wherein the coupling mechanism comprises a latch and link coupling mechanism.

6. (New) The hardware member of claim 2, wherein the coupling mechanism comprises a camlock coupling mechanism.

7. (New) The hardware member of claim 3, wherein the elongated slots are rounded.

8. (New) The hardware member of claim 4, wherein said first angle is between about 5-40 degrees.

9. (New) The hardware member of claim 4, wherein said first angle is between about 10-30 degrees.

10. (New) The hardware member of claim 4, wherein said first angle is about 15 degrees.

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11. (New) The hardware member of claim 4, wherein said second angle is between about 5-40 degrees.

12. (New) The hardware member of claim 4, wherein said second angle is between about 10-30 degrees.

13. (New) The hardware member of claim 4, wherein said second angle is about 15 degrees.

14. (New) A hardware member for attachment to a coupling mechanism of a safety belt for protecting an occupant in a seat of a vehicle, the hardware member comprising:

a tang portion for attachment to the coupling mechanism, the tang portion having a tang longitudinal axis;

a second longitudinal axis defined to be substantially perpendicular to the tang longitudinal axis; and

a body portion coupled to the tang portion, the body portion having a first opening and a second opening formed therethrough;

wherein the first opening defines a first longitudinal axis that is at a first angle to the second longitudinal axis in a first plane and is at a second angle to the second longitudinal axis in a second plane, wherein the first and second planes are orthogonal; and

wherein the second opening defines a third longitudinal axis that is at a third angle

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to the second longitudinal axis in a third plane and is at a fourth angle to the second longitudinal axis in a fourth plane, wherein the third and fourth planes are orthogonal.

15. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein:

the first opening comprises a first elongated slot; and
the second opening comprises a second elongated slot.

16. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein the coupling mechanism comprises a latch and link mechanism.

17. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein the coupling mechanism comprises a camlock coupling mechanism.

18. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein said first angle is between about 5-40 degrees.

19. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein said first angle is between about 10-30 degrees.

20. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein said first angle is about 15 degrees.

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21. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein said second angle is between about 5-40 degrees.
22. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein said second angle is between about 10-30 degrees.
23. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein said second angle is about 15 degrees.
24. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein said third angle is between about 5-40 degrees.
25. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein said third angle is between about 10-30 degrees.
26. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein said third angle is about 15 degrees.
27. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein said fourth angle is between about 5-40 degrees.

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28. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein said fourth angle is between about 10-30 degrees.

29. (New) The hardware member of claim 14, wherein said fourth angle is about 15 degrees.

30. (New) A safety belt apparatus for use by an occupant in a vehicle, the safety belt apparatus comprising:

- at least one shoulder belt operatively coupled to the vehicle;
- at least one lap belt operatively coupled to the vehicle;
- first and second anti-submarine belts operatively coupled to the vehicle; and
- a coupling mechanism operatively coupled to the at least one shoulder belt, the at least one lap belt, and the first and second anti-submarine belts, such that the first and second anti-submarine belts are positioned between the driver's legs when the coupling mechanism couples the at least one shoulder belt, the at least one lap belt and the first and second anti-submarine belts to one another.

31. (New) The safety belt apparatus of claim 30, the coupling mechanism further comprising:

- a tang portion defining a slot therein; and
- a body portion defining at least two slots, wherein the slots are constructed and

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arranged to receive the first and second anti-submarine belts, wherein the at least two slots are positioned on the side of the tang proximate to the anti-submarine belts.

32. (New) The safety belt apparatus of claim 31, wherein the slot defined in the tang portion is constructed and arranged to receive a latch and link mechanism.

33. (New) The safety belt apparatus of claim 31, wherein the slot defined in the tang portion is constructed and arranged to receive a camlock.

34. (New) The safety belt apparatus of claim 30, the coupling mechanism including three slots.

35. (New) The safety belt apparatus of claim 34, wherein the three slots are positioned in three different planes.

36. (New) The safety belt apparatus of claim 34, wherein the three slots respectively define a first slot longitudinal axis, a second slot longitudinal axis, and a third slot longitudinal axis, wherein the first slot longitudinal axis is at a first angle to the second slot longitudinal axis and the third slot longitudinal axis is at a second angle to the second slot longitudinal axis.

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37. (New) The safety belt apparatus of claim 31, further comprising:

a tang longitudinal axis;

a third slot;

a first slot longitudinal axis;

a second slot longitudinal axis; and

a third slot longitudinal axis,

wherein the second slot longitudinal axis is substantially perpendicular to the tang longitudinal axis;

wherein the first slot longitudinal axis is at a first angle to the second slot longitudinal axis in a first plane and is at a second angle to the second slot longitudinal axis in a second plane, wherein the first and second planes are orthogonal; and

wherein the third slot longitudinal axis is at a third angle to the second slot longitudinal axis in a third plane and is at a fourth angle to the second slot longitudinal axis in a fourth plane, wherein the third and fourth planes are orthogonal.

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